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Personal Explanation.  
Speech of Hon. Wm. G.  
Brownlow, of Tennessee  
in the Senate of the  
United States. 1872





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# Personal Explanation.

## SPEECH

OF

# HON. WILLIAM G. BROWNLOW, OF TENNESSEE,

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, FEBRUARY 15, 1872.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Tennessee [Mr. BROWNLOW] now has the consent of the Senate to make a personal explanation in writing, and the Secretary will read it.

The Secretary proceeded to read the speech of Mr. BROWNLOW, as follows:

Mr. President. I speak to a question of privilege, and ask permission of the Senate to reply to some aspersions on my character made by a member of the House of Representatives on the 22d ultimo, which appear in the Daily Globe of the 23d. The Secretary will find them on page 7 of that issue under the name of "Mr. BECK."

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Chair must ask the Secretary to stop at this point. The rule in Jefferson's Manual, quoted from Grey and Hatsell, reads:

"It is a breach of order in debate to notice what has been said on the same subject in the other House, or the particular votes or majorities on it there."

Also:

"Neither House can exercise any authority over a member or officer of the other, but should complain to the House of which he is, and leave the punishment to them. Where the complaint is of words disrespectfully spoken by a member of another House, it is difficult to obtain punishment, because of the rules supposed necessary to be observed (as to the immediate noting down of words) for the security of members. Therefore, it is the duty of the House, and more particularly of the Speaker, to interfere immediately, and not to permit expressions to go unnoticed which may give a ground of complaint to the other House, and introduce proceedings and mutual accusations between the two Houses which can hardly be terminated without difficulty and disorder."—3 *Hatsell*, 51.

The Chair is compelled, without knowing what this refers to, or what has been said in the other House, to draw the attention of the Senate to this point, as it is the duty of the Presiding Officer, and so stated in the authority in the Manual, to arrest proceedings at this particular point, because if this is a speech replying to words spoken disrespectfully of a Senator in the other House, then of course it can be replied to by the member in the other House, giving, as it is said, "a ground of complaint," and introducing "proceedings and mutual accusations between the two Houses

which can hardly be terminated without difficulty and disorder." It is, however, for the Senate, as the Chair has performed his duty, to decide what they please on the subject.

Mr. CHANDLER. I think it would perhaps have been very well had that rule been enforced in the other House; but I ask unanimous consent for the Senator from Tennessee to proceed, inasmuch as the member of the House was allowed to proceed.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Chair does not know what proceedings have transpired in the other House in regard to this matter, and therefore speaks without knowledge, official or unofficial.

Mr. CHANDLER. I ask unanimous consent—

Mr. TRUMBULL. I would like to hear the sentence read again, that we may know what it is.

The VICE PRESIDENT. It will be again reported.

The Secretary read as follows:

"I speak to a question of privilege, and ask permission of the Senate to reply to some aspersions on my character made by a member of the House of Representatives on the 22d ultimo, which appear in the Congressional Globe of the 23d. The Secretary will find them on page 7 of that issue, under the name of 'Mr. BECK.'"

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Chair will state that of course it is unpleasant to him to arrest the remarks of the Senator from Tennessee, as he is unable to deliver those remarks himself; but he performs this unpleasant duty as he would in regard to any Senator on either side of the Chamber who had risen and opened his remarks in the same way, because the Manual is imperative on the subject. The Senator from Michigan asks unanimous consent that under the circumstances the remarks of the Senator from Tennessee may be reported.

Mr. TRUMBULL. It is very embarrassing, in consequence of the situation of the Senator from Tennessee, to say anything in regard to this. I do not know what will follow, but it apparently is a reply to something that has been said in the House of Representatives; and

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the suggestion that it occurs to me would perhaps under the circumstances be the proper one to make would be, as perhaps the Senator from Tennessee may not have had his attention called to the rule, that he withdraw this matter until to-morrow morning and see whether there is anything in his remarks that is obnoxious to the rule which has been read by the Chair, and if there should be, I have no doubt the Senator from Tennessee would himself modify them so as to make his remarks entirely parliamentary and proper to be delivered here. I merely make that as a suggestion, as it would, perhaps, relieve any embarrassment that would otherwise arise.

Mr. CONKLING. Of course I do not know the undisclosed contents of this paper; but I humbly submit to the Senate that there is nothing, so far, in the reading which subjects the Senator from Tennessee to the rule. He says that he finds in the Globe a certain thing, and that it contains aspersions upon him. That is a fact. He says he proposes to reply to that. Now, it may be that in the subsequent portions of his address he invades the privileges of the House or of some member of it; but I submit to the Senate and the Chair that he does not, except in a very technical and formal way, by saying that he finds in the Globe a paragraph or a statement headed as follows, which contains aspersions upon his character. I take it that if the person whose name he mentions in the House read an article from a newspaper, or read a letter from any individual reflecting upon him, and he finds that in the Globe, he does not subject himself to the rule merely by locating the place where he finds it, and saying that he proposes to reply to aspersions there. I can understand how he may very well reply to aspersions without interfering with the rule at all. I do not know how that may be. It may be that the rule is interfered with. I only now submit to the Chair and to the Senate that we have not heard enough to say that the Senator, in any sense except a very technical one, has violated the rule to which the Chair has very properly and so kindly called his attention.

Mr. HAMLIN. In corroboration of what the Senator from New York has said, allow me to call the attention of the Chair to the precise language of the rule, which should leave no doubt on the minds of Senators, if there were any doubt after the explanation of the Senator from New York. I take it this rule and this law applies where disrespectful words are spoken, because it says, "where the complaint is of words disrespectfully spoken." I take it that it is proper, and it is done every day here, for Senators to act on what appears in the Globe as having been said by members of the House in a respectful manner, and certainly in the address which the Senator from Tennessee has prepared, and the reading of which has just been commenced, there has been no word yet disclosed showing that the Senator means to speak disrespectfully of a member of the House. If there should be words disrespectful used by the Senator,

then only, and not until then, would the rule apply.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Maine has quoted the words of the rule, but the Chair looks at them very differently. The remarks of the Senator from Tennessee opened by saying that he asked permission to reply to some aspersions on his character made by a member of the House of Representatives on the 22d ultimo. The rule applies: "Where the complaint is of words disrespectfully spoken by a member of another House." An aspersion on the character of the Senator from Tennessee is certainly "words disrespectfully spoken" of him, and he makes complaint and desires to address the Senate on the subject.

In regard to the precise point made by the Senator from New York, the Chair would state, in reply, that there have been no words disclosed yet in this address, nor does the Chair know what the words are that violate any rule of the Senate in regard to parliamentary decorum except possibly reference directly to the proceedings of the other House. But if it is the pleasure of the Senate that these remarks shall be made, of course the Chair will conform to that pleasure.

Mr. CONKLING. By the permission of the Chair I should like to say that I intended to draw the attention of the Chair to the fact that the honorable Senator from Tennessee does not, I submit, make complaint of these words. He refers to the fact that such words have been uttered, and he says he proposes to reply to them. Perhaps he means to reply in a spirit of complaint; perhaps he means to reply disrespectfully; but I think we have a right, as the Chair has now suggested, to assume that he means to reply, as he has a right to reply, until the contrary appears.

Mr. MORTON. It seems to me that where a member of the other House has been permitted by the rules of the House to make aspersions on the character of a Senator, the Senator ought at least to have unanimous consent to make a reply to such aspersions as might be proper in view of the language which has been employed, and there are circumstances connected with the Senator from Tennessee that would make this especially proper, and I think he should be allowed to reply in terms that may be fit and proper in view of the character of the charges that may have been made against him. I hope, therefore, unanimous consent will be given.

The VICE PRESIDENT. All the Senators who have spoken appear to regard that the Senator should proceed with his remarks until some language is disclosed which will require the Chair to interfere. The Secretary, then, will resume the reading.

The Secretary continued the reading of Mr. BROWNLOW'S speech, as follows:

The Secretary will find them on page 7 of that issue under the name of "Mr. BECK:"

"No, sir; I have not time. When Georgia elected a Legislature which was Democratic, the President, through General Terry and his soldiers, re-recon-

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struated that State, and put into the Legislature nineteen Republicans who had been defeated, turning out the duly-elected Democratic members, so as to make it a Republican Legislature. The result is that her debts and liabilities, as Mr. Angier, the treasurer, shows, were \$50,000,000 when Bullock left, many millions of which have been stolen, and are forever lost to the people of that State. Those two great States have thus been plundered by men imposed upon them by Congress and the President against their will, and so it has been in nearly all the southern States. Virginia, it is true, escaped, as my friend from Indiana [Mr. VOORHEES] says: she never fell under Radical rule; and Mississippi happened to elect one of her own citizens, which partially saved her for a time. In North Carolina Governor Holden was successfully impeached for high crimes and misdemeanors; he is now editor of the Government organ at Washington city. Governor Bullock, of Georgia, resigned his position, and fled from the State to prevent certain conviction for like offenses. Governor Smith, of Alabama, retired in disgrace, proved to have officially plundered his State by the illegal and corrupt issue of \$500,000 of her bonds to the Alabama and Chattanooga Railroad Company; Scott, of South Carolina, proved by his own partisans to be a public plunderer, who, if he escapes impeachment, must buy his corrupt Legislature; Reed, of Florida, willfully robbing his State by illegally placing millions of her bonds in the hands of such a thief as Littlefield is shown to be; CLAYTON, of Arkansas, charged by Radical officials with all sorts of corruption, and indicted in a Radical court by a Radical grand jury for the most flagrant offenses; Warnoth, of Louisiana, if half that is said against him by his own party friends be true, is worse than any of them; BROWNLOW, while in Tennessee, making a Pandemonium of that State; Davis, of Texas, a tyrant and usurper, who is denounced by his people, regardless of party, as a fiend in human form, whose orders and acts are a disgrace to American civilization—these are the men placed by Congress over seven million people in nine once free and independent States; men who are loathed and execrated by the people whose rights, liberty, and honor it was their duty to protect. Retributive justice is on their track; some have been overtaken, the others will be. Hated and despised, their only refuge, if they can escape the penitentiary, seems to be in the Senate of the United States."

I beg leave to state that some ten days had elapsed after the utterance of these remarks before they were called to my attention; and as they assailed my official integrity while Governor of Tennessee I have delayed my response in order to receive from home some facts which prove their recklessness and falsity.

The charges of Mr. BECK are, in general terms, that the southern States have "been plundered by men imposed upon them by Congress and the President against their will," with particular reference to myself as "BROWNLOW, while in Tennessee, making a Pandemonium of that State;" and in order that I may not escape the imputations of a want of integrity, or unmitigated scoundrelism which he hurls at the southern governments, he further says:

"These are the men placed by Congress over seven million people in nine once free and independent States; men who are loathed and execrated by the people whose rights, liberty, and honor it was their duty to protect. Retributive justice is on their track; some have been overtaken, the others will be. Hated and despised, their only refuge, if they can escape the penitentiary, seems to be in the Senate of the United States."

As I am one of the two Governors alluded to, now Senators of the United States, these general charges apply to me, and I cannot permit them to go unanswered to the country.

I have had nothing to do with the administration of any other State than the one I have

the honor to represent in part in the Senate; and shall therefore confine my reply to that portion of Mr. BECK's remarks which asperse the government of Tennessee and myself personally.

There was a time in the history of my life when Mr. BECK would not have dared to put this or any other insult upon me, for fear I would have taken from his hand the slave-whip with which, as overseer on a Kentucky plantation, he was accustomed to whip negroes for pay, and laid it across his own back. The code by which the gentlemen of Kentucky were governed in those days, having in it certain principles of honor, would not have reached low enough down in the social scale to find his level; for when he abandoned the honorable pursuit of hostler in a livery stable to become a slave-driver he betrayed the possession of qualities which the gentlemen of old Kentucky never ceased to despise.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Chair must state that he regards this language as language which could not be regarded as in order if addressed by one Senator to another on the floor; and therefore, regretting that he is compelled to do it in performance of duty to himself, he reads again from page 232 of the Manual, to which he has already drawn the attention of the Senate:

"Therefore it is the duty of the House, and more particularly of the Speaker"—

Which, of course, means the Presiding Officer here—

"to interfere immediately, and not to permit expressions to go unnoticed which may give a ground of complaint in the other House, and introduce proceedings and mutual accusations between the two Houses, which can hardly be terminated without difficulty and disorder."

Of course, if these remarks were consented to by the Chair, a reply to them would be as much in order in the House. It is for the Senate to decide.

Mr. BLAIR. I hope no objection will be interposed, but that the Senator will be allowed to proceed.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Missouri asks unanimous consent that the Secretary shall continue the reading notwithstanding the point made by the Chair. Is there objection? The Chair hears none.

The Secretary continued the reading of Mr. BROWNLOW's speech as follows:

If the overseers of Kentucky whipped the negroes under their slave system of labor, the gentlemen of Kentucky, be it said to their credit, sometimes whipped the overseers; they did not fight with them. Their code of honor forbade it. But both of these methods have gone out of date, and in the upheavals of the civil war we find men who were once overseers aspiring to the seats formerly filled by Clay and Crittenden, denouncing the Senate as a house of refuge for thieves, and yet canvassing their States to secure a seat in it. If it be a mere refuge from the penitentiary, why, I would like to ask, is Mr. BECK so anxious to come to the Senate? Is he affrighted by the rapidly closing career of his Democratic com-

patriots, Boss Tweed, Peter B. Sweeny, Conolly, and Hall? Does the shadow of Sing Sing reach all the way to Kentucky? Does it forewarn him of his impending doom, that he should strive to find a refuge here, like the guilty king of England, who exclaimed :

“ By the apostle Paul, shadows to-night  
Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard,  
Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers ?”

I am a refugee, and while the short limit of my life endures cannot recover from its outward signs. These feeble limbs that need assistance to bring me to this Chamber; these palsied hands that ask for help to write; my whispering voice that cannot speak my thoughts, all bear testimony to the fact—I am a refugee. It is a coward's part to call me one, but yet I hold the title as an honor.

I first became a refugee on the 5th day of November, 1861, having remained at my home in Knoxville defending the cause of my country against organized treason at the risk of my life until that day. How I had escaped immolation I do not know, except that it was in the mercy of God's providence which sustained me in my efforts to put down a hell-born rebellion. My paper had been suppressed and my arrest for treason against the southern confederacy determined upon.

In my last issue of the Knoxville Whig, dated October 24, 1861, I addressed my subscribers in the following terms:

“ I shall in no degree feel humbled by being cast into prison whenever it is the will and pleasure of this august Government to put me there: but on the contrary, I shall feel proud of my confinement. I shall go to jail as John Rodgers went to the stake—for my principles. I shall go because I have failed to recognize the hand of God in the work of breaking up the American Government, and the inauguration of the most wicked, cruel, unnatural, and un-called-for war ever recorded in history. I go because I have refused to laud to the skies the acts of tyranny, usurpation, and oppression inflicted upon the people of East Tennessee for their devotion to the Constitution and laws of the Government handed down to them by their fathers, and the liberties secured to them by a war of seven long years of gloom, poverty, and trial.” \* \* \* \* \* “ Exchanging with proud satisfaction the editorial chair and the sweet endearments of home for a cell in the prison or the lot of an exile, I have the honor to be, &c.,

WILLIAM G. BROWNLOW,  
*Editor of Knoxville Whig.*”

The utterance of words like these made me a “ refugee,” and on the 5th of the succeeding month I found a hiding place from the bloodhounds of rebellion in the smoky mountains which separate North Carolina from Tennessee, beyond the precincts of civilization. Amid the high summits of this range, and in one of their deep gorges where no vehicle had ever penetrated, I found a temporary refuge until rebel scouts discovered my hiding-place. I was then induced by false promises of protection and being sent through the lines to deliver myself up to the rebel authorities of the confederacy in Tennessee, but they treacherously threw me into prison. I will not detail the dreary horrors of that incarceration, in which I saw men led from my side to an execution I expected daily to share; others dying of fever; the agonized cries of wives and children of men sent to death for loving their country.

I, who was second to no man in strength and vigor of body and constitution, came out of prison sick, and have never recovered from the shock my system there received.

After this I was exiled by the rebel government, sent through their lines, and became a refugee north of the Ohio, while he who assails me did what? I had liked to have said he doffed his rebel uniform and joined the army of traitors to fight against his country; but that would be paying an undeserved tribute to a courage he never possessed. He obtained his commission, he got his uniform and equipments ready, but he never wore them. Like Falstaff, he thought “ discretion the better part of valor,” and skulked. Whipping Union soldiers was a different sort of pastime from whipping slaves, as the most courageous overseer thought twice before a fighting game in which the opposite party held as good a hand as he.

I returned to my home with Burnside's army, and when at last the voice of the loyal people of Tennessee could be heard through the ballot-box, they gave me a “ refuge” in the gubernatorial chair of that State. I was not put there by Congress and the President. After the expiration of my term of service the same people reelected me to a second gubernatorial term by over fifty-two thousand majority, and before the expiration of that term the Legislature sent me to this “ refuge.”

There were some extraordinary expenses, but very necessary ones, which the State had to incur during my administration, resulting from the destruction of State property by the rebels. Among the first of my duties was to rebuild the penitentiary, a large portion of which the Democracy had burnt down in 1864, perhaps from a desire to have the leaders of their party at large. This was adding to the State's indebtedness, but should not be charged to my account. The State lunatic asylum was dilapidated, and its splendid grounds and valuable farm property of hundreds of acres run down. These had to be renovated and a new building had to be erected to provide for the colored insane, no provision having been made for them before. The school fund had been appropriated to purposes of treason. All over the State rebellion had done its baleful work of destruction. The asylum for the deaf and dumb children of the State had been occupied as a hospital, its furniture destroyed and property injured, and appropriations for its support and repairing had to be made. Railroads were worn out, their rolling-stock destroyed and run south; bridges destroyed; depots demolished, and I was compelled to rebuild; and he who charges that in anything I did I was animated by other than a sincere desire to serve my State, or that I had an itching palm, or that one cent of the people's money, other than my limited salary, was appropriated to my own uses, is, without qualification, an unmitigated liar.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The reading will be suspended. The morning hour has expired, and the resolution of the Senator from Massachusetts [Mr. SUMNER] is before



the Senate, upon which the Senator from Iowa [Mr. HARLAN] is entitled to the floor.

Mr. CHANDLER. I ask that the regular order be passed over informally.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Michigan asks that it be informally passed over until the conclusion of the remarks of the Senator from Tennessee. The Chair hears no objection, and the resolution will be informally passed over. The reading of the remarks of the Senator from Tennessee will be continued.

The Secretary continued to read Mr. BROWNLOW's speech, as follows:

I invite investigation and I challenge proof. I saw it stated the other day in a leading paper that it is a bad symptom of the times that public men, whose integrity is assailed, take no notice of the slanders, if they be such, allowing themselves to be classed among the guilty whose only refuge is in silence. I am not one of that class. I do cherish my reputation for integrity. Men may say what they please of my political views and public policy. If the first are unsound, they are at least those of a majority of my fellow-countrymen; and if the latter seems harsh to the enemies of the Union they will at least admit that it has been consistent. Their tender mercies toward myself and the Unionists of East Tennessee were hardly the sort of schooling they could expect to produce a meek and merciful ruler. If I have, to a certain extent, repaid them in kind, let them remember Gratiano's response to Shylock:

"I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word."

They must, moreover, acquit me of returning their savagery in degree; for I neither had them whipped nor hung, nor otherwise maltreated them as I saw them treat those who agreed with me. But there is one thing I permit no man to assail without response, and that is my honesty. I know the fallibility of human judgment, and can therefore view with unconcern all differences of opinion; but if I have any knowledge of my own acts, and must carry that knowledge to the bar of final judgment where He who judges will know whether I speak truly or not, I never soiled my soul with speculation, nor used the people's trust for private gain. My enemies, and I have plenty of them, as my country has, in Tennessee, will tell the member from Kentucky that his statement is not true. If he reads the Democratic newspapers of Tennessee he would long since have learned that his own party do not believe me to have been corrupt in office. The most influential newspapers of the State which supported Seymour and Blair have vindicated me from any imputation upon my personal or official integrity. Differing widely from me upon the policy of my administration, they have nevertheless done me the justice to acquit me of any official malfeasance or personal dishonesty. It is further gratifying to me to state that such has been my treatment at the hands of the Democratic press generally in Tennessee since the bitterness of local conflict has ceased, while many prominent leaders of that party have paid me a like tribute. I avail myself

of this opportunity, for I may never have another, to thank them for this, and to express my grateful acknowledgments for what I believe to be their just appreciation of my character in that respect.

Of course my administration in Tennessee did not escape without personal motives of self-interest being ascribed to me; but as I had no reason to shun the broad light of day upon all my acts, I invited investigation, and had the good fortune to be vindicated by my political antagonists. A Democratic committee of the Legislature, which looked into my administration of affairs with the hope of finding some delinquency which would give them a triumph over me, reported that they could find nothing. I was charged with personal motives in the suit of *The State vs. William H. Ballew et al.*, from which I was vindicated by the decision of the supreme court of Tennessee, composed exclusively of my political opponents, and the record is there for any to peruse who wish.

At one period, with the view of making political capital, my action with regard to the issue of State bonds was assailed by a gentleman who has since confessed his ignorance of the facts, and frankly admitted the errors of his statements and the injustice done me.

Mr. A. J. Fletcher, then secretary of State, by no means in harmony with me personally, made the following statement in the *New York Times* for the satisfaction of Tennessee bondholders, not purposely in my vindication. The result, however, will be seen to have been a thorough justification of my course in that regard:

OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE,  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE, October 4, 1869.

To the Editor of the *New York Times*:

Some days since my attention was called to a letter from your correspondent at Knoxville, dated September 16, 1869, upon the finances of Tennessee, with a request that the statements therein contained be denied or explained. As the letter was anonymous, and its statements, as I supposed, generally known to be unfounded, I did not deem the communication worthy of attention. But as I continue to receive letters of inquiry as to the statements alluded to, I will, with your permission and through your paper, notice the principal allegations of your correspondent.

AMOUNT OF THE STATE DEBT.

The statement that the debt of Tennessee has been increased since the war from \$16,000,000 to \$40,000,000 is recklessly made, in total ignorance of the facts. As the financial report of the comptroller will be sent to the Legislature in a few days, it will not be necessary here to make exact calculation as to amounts, as they will then fully appear. I will, in view of the early appearance of that important document, use round numbers in this paper. The entire State debt at the beginning of the war was about eighteen million dollars. The interest which accumulated during the war amounted to over four million five hundred thousand dollars, and the debt that matured during the war amounted to about half a million; making the State debt at the close of the war about twenty-three million dollars. Since then over a million dollars of that debt has matured and been funded by the issuance of new bonds. It will be seen that your correspondent considers the \$5,000,000 that matured during the war and \$1,000,000 since as an increase of the debt. And even upon that assumption, his statements are greatly exaggerated. The actual amount of the increase of the debt since the war, for all purposes, does not reach \$14,000,000. Your correspondent has it \$24,000,000 — an error of \$10,000,000.

## ALLEGED FRAUD IN SIGNING AND SEALING BONDS.

Your correspondent further says: "I am informed, on very reliable authority, that there is no record in the comptroller's or treasurer's office at Nashville to show just how many bonds have been issued since Governor BROWNLOW'S administration commenced. Irresponsible men were intrusted by him with blank bonds, to which the seal of the State was affixed, and no living human being knows the number they signed and issued."

It is only necessary to say that both the comptroller's books and the books of the Executive, kept by the secretary of State, will show the exact amount, date of issuance, numbers and time of maturity, with the letters and series of every bond issued since the war, as well as the purpose of issuance and a reference to the law under which such bond was issued. The latter sentence of the foregoing quotation is without the slightest foundation in fact.

Again: "Sworn witnesses deposed, before one of the investigating committees of the last Legislature, that one of BROWNLOW'S agents was found some time ago in one of the private banks of New York signing Tennessee bonds, which were furnished him in blank, with the seal of the State affixed. No perfect record has been kept by the officer at Nashville of the number of bonds issued, and I see no reason to doubt but that many were signed and issued without any authority."

I have before me the original deposition of the only witness who spoke of signing the Governor's name in New York. It is so grossly perverted as to make the foregoing statement worse than simply untrue. On one occasion the Governor's clerk, who signed his name to all papers, went to New York to receive a lot of blank bonds from the National Bank Note Company, who were the engravers. Not wishing to return to Nashville immediately, and the bonds being needed, he signed about two hundred with the Governor's name, without the great seal, and sent them by express to the secretary's office, where they were countersigned and sealed, passed, to the comptroller for the signing of the coupons, and then issued to the railroad company entitled to them. This is all there is of this story.

## REPUDIATION NOT POPULAR.

It is not true that "many of their leading men are open and avowed repudiators." It may be true that a few persons in Tennessee, misled by such reports as your correspondent publishes, have spoken of repudiating any bonds that might appear to be illegally issued, but nothing more. I have conversed with most of the members of the incoming Legislature, and have yet to hear a single one speak of repudiating any bond lawfully issued.

Referring to a statement of the new bonds lately published from this office, your correspondent says:

"The bonds embraced in the third class were issued in exchange for some bonds which were returned as mutilated and defaced. New ones were issued in their stead, but I am informed that the defaced bonds cannot now be found, and it is believed they are also in circulation."

If this statement is true, the Governor, secretary of State, and comptroller, and all others implicated with them, are guilty of felonies of gigantic proportions. Of course no denial from those officers will be expected. But for the information of those interested in Tennessee securities, I will state that a book has been kept in the secretary's office, in which a receipt will appear for every bond issued in exchange for each mutilated, defaced, or defective bond taken up, showing the numbers, dates, series and amount of both, the new bond issued and the new bond taken up, and also the receipt of the comptroller for the old bond thus retired; in addition to which, every bond thus retired is now in the comptroller's office, completely canceled with the proper instruments. And every coupon which has matured since 1861, and which has been paid or funded, is also preserved, totally canceled, and pasted in a book in such manner as to be easily counted.

I shall not combat the legal argument of your correspondent in vindication of his position that "a State is sovereign, and cannot be sued without her consent," except to state that the reports of the Supreme Court of the United States would seem to indicate that the like has been done very often, and that the ablest lawyers in Tennessee are of opinion that our bondholders may be subrogated to the

rights of the State in her railroads. The disclosure of your correspondent's name may cast all these into the background, in view of which I will not enter the lists with him.

## REGULAR RECORD OF ALL BONDS.

In conclusion, I will take this occasion to say to all holders of Tennessee bonds that every new bond of the State now in circulation has been sealed and countersigned by me, after being signed by the Governor himself, or some one known to me to have been authorized to sign his name; that the books which record the issuance and retiring of bonds have been kept with far more accuracy and fullness since the war than they were before; and that, having been connected, as secretary of State, with the State government since its organization in 1865—being now the oldest State officer in office—I venture the statement that not a single reason can be given for the repudiation of the new bonds that does not apply with equal force, if there be any force in such reason, to the old bonds.

## THE STATE DEBT CAN BE PAID.

The resumption of the payment of the interest may be delayed for several years—perhaps three years—but as yet no well-informed Tennessean thinks of repudiation; and unless further anarchy and revolution occurs every dollar of her liabilities will be paid. Any able business man, if he could be untrammelled, can take charge of the finances of Tennessee, and by a judicious management of the State's lien on her railroads reduce the debt of the State in twelve months to \$9,000,000, a sum that the people of the State would not be conscious of. Half of the entire debt rests upon railroad companies, who pay their interest without difficulty, and who are already considering the project of buying in the bonds of the State to an extent sufficient to extinguish their entire liabilities to the State. This would certainly be sound financial policy on their part; and as the Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company has done so, strong hopes are entertained that other companies will follow.

## WHEN INTEREST WILL BE PAID.

Your correspondent gives the new bondholders the comforting assurance that their interest will not be paid in ten years. The duration of the suspension of the payment of the interest on the State debt will depend upon the action of the Legislature, now about to convene. Some of the ablest men in the State are members of that body, including learned lawyers and experienced business men and large property holders. Of course no prediction can be safely made as to the duration of the suspension, but there is no reason why payment should not be resumed in two years; and, allowing for differences in policy and all short-comings, three years without war will certainly bring to the bondholder his semi-annual interest in cash. There will be no discrimination between the old and the new bonds, either as to principal or interest. There is no difference in merit or consideration, and the whole cause of their being assailed is that those who provided for their issuance are hated by many who believe it was impossible for anything to be done right while Brownlow was Governor.

Respectfully,

A. J. FLETCHER,  
Secretary of State of Tennessee.

I do not deem it necessary to go further in vindicating either my personal or official integrity. If it shall ever be the good fortune of the member from Kentucky to receive the same number of evidences of his State's regard as I have received from mine, and after the discharge of his public functions he can show as clean a pair of hands, I trust no younger man will be so ungracious as to charge him with escaping from the penitentiary.

His declaration that I am loathed and execrated by the people of my State is as false as hell, for it is the solace of my declining days that they bring me every day renewed evidences of the good will and kindly appreciation of my fellow-citizens of Tennessee. The asperities of the war are not yet over, and I doubtless

share in the hatred which unrepentant rebels still manifest toward Union men, but I am sustained by a good conscience and unfaltering trust in divine goodness, and I can stand that.

My public acts are already a part of the history of my State and country, and I submit them to the honest judgment of posterity. As for my rude assailant, as Daniel Webster once said of a contemptible foe—

“I leave him; I leave him in the worst of all possible company; I leave him with himself.”

Since the foregoing remarks were delivered, Mr. BECK has attempted to vindicate himself by rising to a personal explanation in the House of Representatives, the substance of which, for the most part, was an attack upon my administration while Governor of Tennessee. I could not expect a man who sympathized with the usurpations of Isham G. Harris, the Governor who forced Tennessee into rebellion, and justified the military dislocation of Tennessee as a member of the Union body against the expressed will of its citizens, to approve of my course. Had he done so, I should have doubted its justice. The man whose treasonable heart rejoiced in the prospect of a destruction of our great Republic, and who countenanced, if he did not applaud, the hanging of its friends in East Tennessee, and the robbery of the school fund and other public moneys to assist rebellious warfare, is not the man whose judgment I care to consult or whose support I should value.

He attempts to assail the validity of my election, and falsely assumes it to have resulted from military interference. Everybody in Tennessee knows that the war left his friends in no condition to make a political contest, they being prisoners of war on parole, and thousands of them still serving in the rebel armies when I was first elected Governor; and that I was peaceably elected by a large majority of the legal voters of Tennessee.

I have never yet quarrelled with the result of the ballot; let those who, after failing to elect their President in 1860, treasonably appealed to force, exclaim at my triumph as they may. I stood by the Constitution and laws then; they attempted to overthrow both, and had a temporary triumph. Is it manly in them to keep up an everlasting whine at being whipped?

The Kentucky member assumes to be the special champion of the people of the South. It appears to make a good deal of difference to him which particular people, and his zeal to save them from oppression has only manifested itself since the poisoned chalice they presented to others has returned to their own lips. Had the South obeyed my counsels she would not now have needed his sympathy; and yet I deny that it is any greater than my own. I have never chosen to justify her folly or palliate her treason, and in opposing both tried honestly to save her from her present fate. The South owes her distress to traitors, and cannot point her finger at me and say I did it. As I tried to save her in the begin-

ning, I have tried to restore her since her fall; but Mr. BECK has not agreed with the wisdom of my method in either case. That only proves that the college education he boasts of has not developed in him much common sense.

In his reply to my defense against his unwarrantable attack the Kentucky Representative avoids the main issue. He says he charged that I made a Pandemonium of Tennessee, about which I clearly stated I did not care for his opinion, and then goes on to justify his remarks in reproducing my militia proclamation and other acts, as Governor of that State, until he had worn out the patience of the House and everybody inquired what that had to do with his so-called personal explanation.

He does not reproduce, however, the contemporaneous statement of the rebel general, N. B. Forrest, over his own signature, that he had forty thousand organized Ku Klux in the State, nor the confirmation given to that statement by the acts of the Ku Klux.

There is nothing in my proclamations and the military orders issued in pursuance thereof requiring an answer from me; but I am gratified to observe on reading them over that I adhered all through to my temperance principles, ordered the general in command to enforce rigid discipline and to show no quarter to officers or privates who should be found guilty of excessive drinking.

He objects that I called out soldiers to keep the peace in Tennessee, when I “had been advised by the authorities at Washington that sufficient military force to aid the civil government would be furnished by the United States.” That is, that being the chief executive of Tennessee, and bound to enforce its laws, I chose to rely upon my own people instead of United States soldiers; or, as the Democrats usually designate them, “Federal bayonets.” That which they claim to be the first duty of all State Governors, namely, to assert the right of local self-government and avoid the centralizing tyranny of “Federal bayonets,” was a heinous crime in me. What consistency! But who could expect anything better from Congressman BECK?

He admits himself to be a foreigner by birth, and yet in his speech, ostensibly replying to my defense against his gross personal attack, he says the people of Kentucky “have met him with ovations at home such as no carpet-bagger in the South ever has or ever will receive.” To say nothing of the shocking grammar of this sentence, is the graduate of Transylvania University so ignorant of the history of this country as to call me a carpet-bagger? If he does not mean me, what right has this sort of talk in his personal explanation?

I have said that he shirks the main issue; and that issue I made very plainly in my reply to his first attack. It was his imputation cast upon my integrity against which I defended myself, not his opinions of my politics. I am one of the two Senators he alluded to when he said “their only refuge from the penitentiary appears to be in the Senate of the United States.”

He must credit the world with excessive stupidity if he supposes it did not make the application he intended. The following editorial notice in the Washington Sunday Chronicle shows how the public viewed his attack upon me, and though there are other papers that have chosen to express their disapprobation of both, I wish it distinctly understood that I was the attacked party and had the right to reply, which no fair mind could deny me:

*Senator Brownlow.*—From the objections urged by the Democratic press to the style and substance of Governor BROWNLOW'S defense of himself and his State against the aspersions of Representative BECK it would appear that, notwithstanding his infirmities, the Tennessee Senator can still strike home. The manner in which he has retorted to the declarations of Mr. BECK, that his 'only refuge from the penitentiary appeared to be in the Senate,' is characteristic, and might have been expected by the Kentucky member or any other man who was at all conversant with Governor BROWNLOW'S career. Those who find fault with his style might as well remember that the style of his assailant was anything but polite. When a man is told he has taken refuge from the penitentiary it implies that he has been guilty of felony, and a severe answer must come in course. Angry men do not pick out fine words, and Governor BROWNLOW has always been noted for his propensity to call a spade a spade. It was certainly a mistake to impute to him a want of integrity, for men who differ widely from him in opinion believe him to be strictly honest, and his political foes at home have vindicated him in that regard. There is no kinder man in the world to his friends than Governor BROWNLOW, and, perhaps as a necessary offset to this trait, no more unrelenting enemy. Nevertheless, he is as easily conciliated by a kind and courteous word as he is aroused by an angry and improper one."—*Sunday Morning Chronicle, February 18, 1872.*

Mr. BECK admits that he was an overseer; but denies that he ever whipped any man's slaves; though he thinks upon reflection that it might have been better, both for him and them, if he had done so sometimes. He does not give up the philosophy of the benefits of negro flogging on the moral nature, and we are therefore in darkness as to how the process would have "been better" for both parties. It is a great pity he did not embrace the opportunity to improve himself in any way, for he sorely needs it.

I cannot regret a speech that has called forth such a gushing specimen of autobiography and maudlin sentiment as follows:

"My family ties bind me to the grand old State of

Virginia. I love the people of the South; and I will stand by them as long as I have a voice to speak," &c.

Truly the State of Virginia should be overwhelmed with this honor, and the much-loved people of the South should appreciate this affectionate—bosh!

The New York Tribune correspondence gives the following graphic summary of the way he did it:

"He now got angry, and said, 'Very well, I will see to it that nothing is printed in the Globe after this that is not read.' 'So will I,' shouted a dozen Democrats. Mr. BECK, who had been making a strong speech against the abominations of reconstruction in Tennessee, now changed his tone, and gave the House all the personalities for which it had stomach. He detailed his personal history in full, even to trivial details. His father had raised the best stock in New York. He had gone to Kentucky poor and friendless, and now represented the greatest district in the United States. He was held up as an example to the young men of his State. He had married a Virginia woman, and his children were the great-grand children of the brother of George Washington. He had never been a hostler in a livery stable, or a slave-driver, and any man who said so was a liar—referring to BROWNLOW. He had never laid a lash on a slave's back; no man had ever laid a lash on his back; no man had struck him a blow; no man would strike him and live. Mr. BECK went on for twenty minutes with this sort of stuff, to the surprise of every one, for he has always ranked as the ablest and most sensible man among the southern Democrats. There is this to be said, however, in justification of the gross breach of good taste which he committed, that he spoke under excitement, and that, when excited, it is almost impossible for a man of southern training to refrain from indulging in braggadocio."

So it appears that he attempts to build up his line of aristocratic succession through the maternal ancestor. That at least is sensible. I have no doubt the "Virginia woman" he married is worthy of all the good he can say of her. The fact, however, that she has such a husband as BECK excites my pity. He does well to point his children to their great-great-grandfather on the mother's side. It will be a gleam of sunshine in the shadow of their father's reputation, and perhaps the Kentucky Legislature will one day let them change their name to the maternal patronymic. They may, in fact, go still further back, and, like Mark Twain in Judea, weep tears over the tomb of Adam as a "distant relation."

WILLIAM G. BROWNLOW.



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